

RESPONSE TO RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT

In response to the Species Requirement mailed on March 19, 2004, Applicants provisionally elect the species of FIGs. 5A-F, the claims readable thereon being 1, 2, 4-8, 14, 15, and 17-24. This election is made with traverse, and Applicants hereby reserve the right to file a divisional application in connection with unelected claims 3, 9-13, 16 and 25-30. Since claims 3 depends from claim 1 and claim 16 depends from claim 14 Applicants, contend claims 3 and 16 would be allowable if claims 1 and 14 are allowed.

With regard to the Restriction Requirement, Applicants respectfully submit that the subject matter of all claims 1-30 is sufficiently related that a thorough search for the subject matter of any one group of claims would encompass a search for the subject matter of the remaining claims. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the search and the examination of the entire application could be made without serious burden. See MPEP § 803, in which it is stated that “if the search and examination of the entire application can be made without serious burden, the Examiner must examine it on the merits, even though it includes claims to independent or distinct inventions” (emphasis added). Applicants respectfully submit that this policy should apply in the present application in order to avoid unnecessary delay and expense to Applicants and duplicative examination by the Patent Office.

CONCLUSION

Should the Examiner require or request anything further from Applicant's prior to examination, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the Agent Direct Dial telephone number below. Otherwise, Applicants request early and favorable examination on the merits.

Respectfully submitted,

BY:

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